

# The Rise of Ancient Greece

## Chapter Preview

This chapter will examine the rise of Ancient Greece and the development of democracy, philosophy, and the arts during the Golden Age of Athens.

### Section 1

The Rise of Greek Civilization

### Section 2

Religion, Philosophy, and the Arts



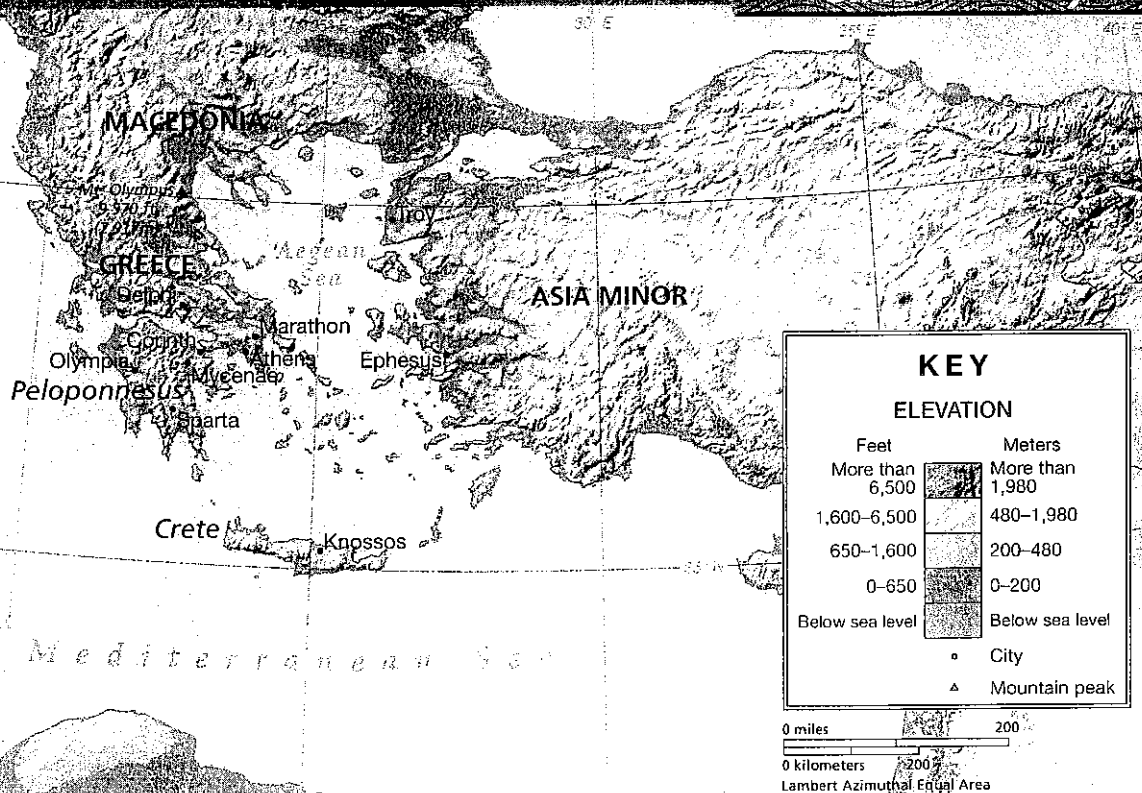
### Target Reading Skill

**Sequence** In this chapter, you will focus on using sequencing to help you understand how events are related to one another. Sequencing helps you see the order in which events happened and can help you understand and remember them.

► The ruins of the Temple of Poseidon in Greece

# Ancient Greece

## MAP MASTER Skills Activity



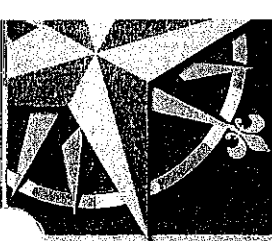
**Location** Notice the land of the ancient Greeks: the mainland and the islands in the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. The ancient Greeks also built colonies on the coast of Asia Minor, or modern-day Turkey.

**Describe** How would you describe the lands of the ancient Greeks?

**Draw Conclusions** Study the map to make some guesses about how the people of ancient Greece earned a living. What role did the sea probably have in their lives? Why do you think some Greeks left ancient Greece to build cities elsewhere?

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mup-0601 for step-by-step  
map skills practice.



# The Rise of Greek Civilization

## Prepare to Read

### Objectives

In this section you will

1. Understand how Greece's geographic setting influenced the development of Greek civilization.
2. Examine early Greek history.
3. Examine the development of democracy in Greece.

### Taking Notes

As you read, find the main ideas and details concerning the rise of Greek civilization. Copy the chart below, and use it to record your findings.

The Rise of Greek Civilization		
<b>Geography</b> • • • • •	<b>Origins</b> • • • • •	<b>Government</b> • • • • •



### Target Reading Skill

#### Identify Sequence

Noting the order in which events take place can help you understand and remember them. You can track the order of events by making a sequence chart. In the first box, write the first event, or the development that sets the other events in motion. Then write each additional event in a box. Use arrows to show how one event leads to the next.

### Key Terms

- **peninsula** (puh NIN suh luh) *n.* an area of land nearly surrounded by water

- **epic** (EP ik) *n.* a long poem that tells a story
- **acropolis** (uh KRAH puh lis) *n.* a high, rocky hill where early people built cities
- **city-state** (SIH tee stayt) *n.* a city with its own traditions, government, and laws; both a city and a separate independent state
- **aristocrat** (uh RIS tuh krat) *n.* a member of a rich and powerful family
- **tyrant** (TY runt) *n.* a ruler who takes power with the support of the middle and working classes
- **democracy** (dih MAHK ruh-see) *n.* a form of government in which citizens govern themselves



Following their defeat of the Titans, Zeus and his brothers and sisters battled the giants. The gods Apollo and Artemis, above left, confront a group of helmeted giants.

First there was nothing. Then came Mother Earth. The gods of Night and Day appeared next, and then the starry Sky. Earth and Sky created the Twelve Titans (TYT unz). These great gods rebelled against their father Sky and took away his power. The youngest of the Titans, Cronos (KROH nus), ruled in his father's place. In time, Cronos had six children. The youngest, mighty Zeus (zoos), toppled Cronos from his throne.

With such stories, the people of ancient Greece described the struggles of their gods. Like their gods, the people of Greece had to struggle for power and independence. Their struggles began with the land itself.

## Greece's Geographic Setting

The land of Greece looks as if the sea had smashed it to pieces. Some pieces have drifted away to form small, rocky islands. Others barely cling to the mainland. Greece is a country made up of peninsulas. A peninsula is an area of land surrounded by water on three sides. Look at the map titled *Ancient Greece*. As you can see, no part of Greece is very far from the sea.

Mountains are the major landform of Greece. Greece's islands are mostly mountain peaks. Mountains wrinkle the mainland, so there are only small patches of farmland. Only about one fifth of Greece is good for growing crops. No wonder the Greeks became traders and sailors. At times, they left Greece to found colonies far away.

What was life like for people living in Greece 3,000 years ago? In a way, the ancient Greeks were all islanders. Some lived on real islands completely surrounded by water or on small peninsulas. Others lived on what could be thought of as land islands. Instead of water, mountains separated these small communities from one another. The geography of Greece made it hard for people from different communities to get together.

For this reason, it is no surprise that ancient Greek communities thought of themselves as separate countries. Each one developed its own customs and beliefs. Each believed its own land, traditions, and way of life were the best. And each was more than ready to go to war to protect itself. In fact, for most of their history, the Greeks were so busy fighting among themselves that it is easy to forget that they shared a common heritage, spoke the same language, and worshiped the same gods.

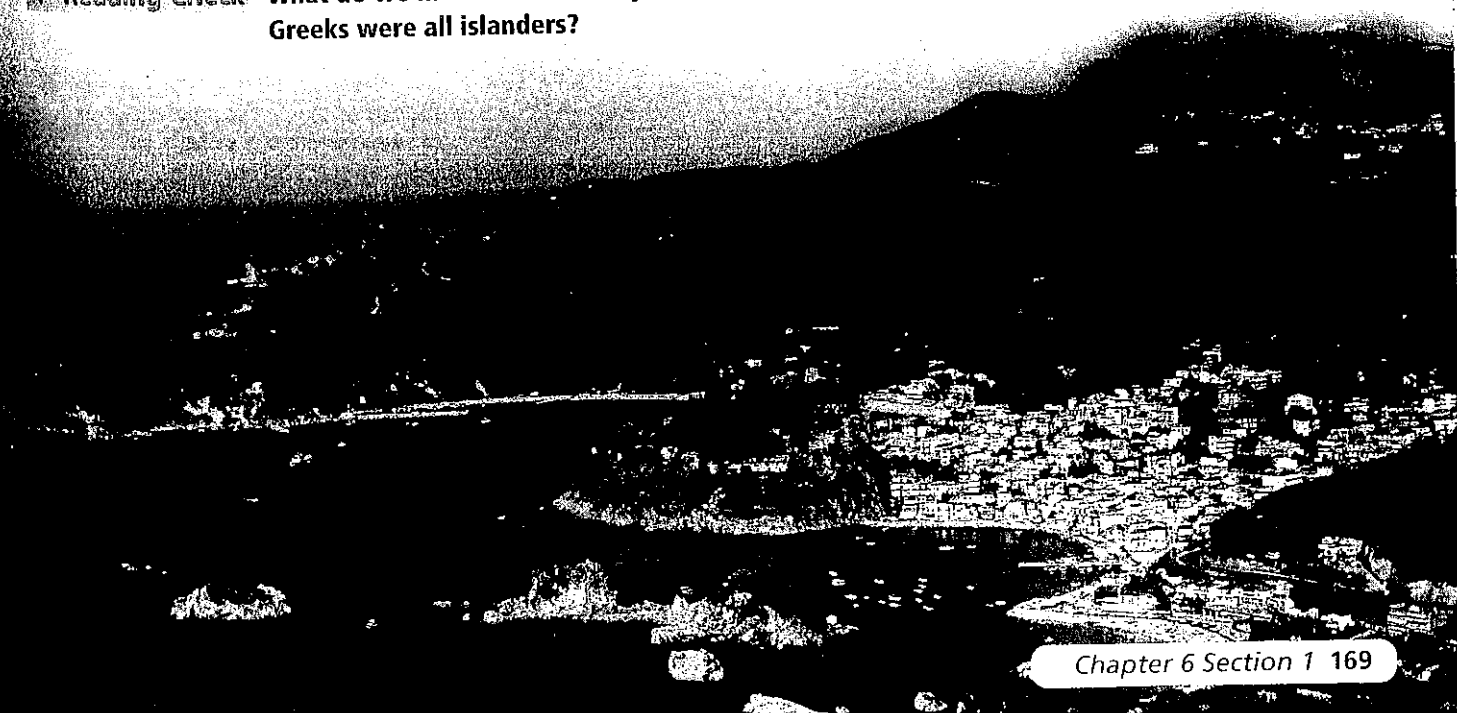
**✓ Reading Check** What do we mean when we say the ancient Greeks were all islanders?

### Greece's Coastline

Several typical geographic features appear in this picture of the northwestern coast of Greece.

These features include a rocky coastline and rugged mountains.

**Critical Thinking** How did the geographic features shown affect the way ancient people lived in this area?



## Greek Beginnings

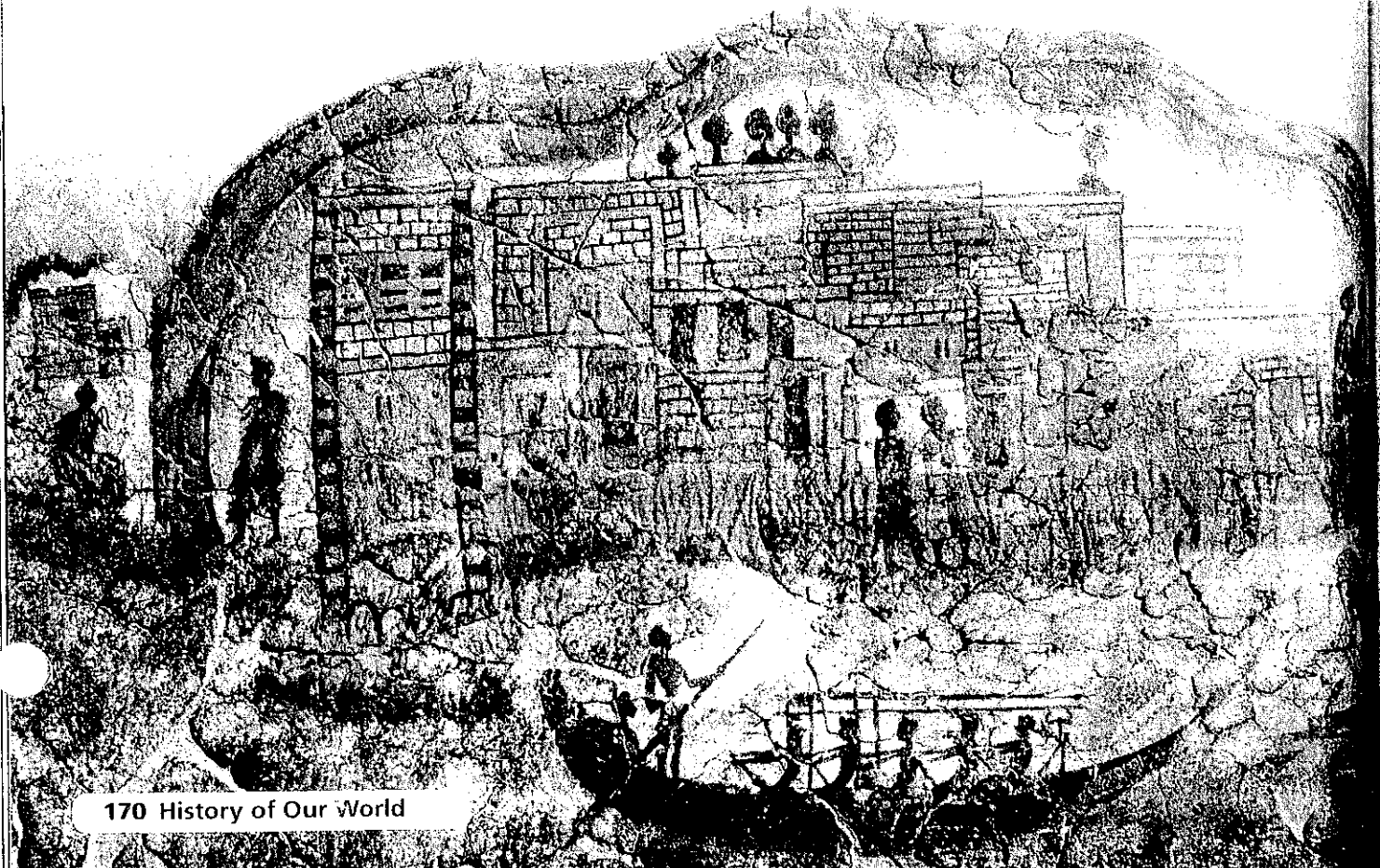
Early Greek civilization arose on and off the Greek mainland. Two ancient peoples, the Minoans (mih NOH unz) and the Mycenaeans (my suh NEE unz), made an important impact on Greek history.



### Early Greek Cultures

The fresco from the 1500s B.C., shown below, illustrates Minoan naval combat. A Mycenaean princess appears in the above photo. **Conclude** How do we know that both the Minoans and the Mycenaeans developed advanced cultures?

**Minoan Civilization** From about 3000 to about 1100 B.C., Bronze Age people called the Minoans lived on the island of Crete (kreet). Washed by the waters of the Aegean (ee JEE un) and Mediterranean Seas, Crete was an ideal place for the Minoans to develop a broad sea trade network. Mainland Greece and other Greek islands, as well as Egypt and Sicily, traded with the Minoans, who at one time dominated the Aegean. Archaeological finds show that the Minoans had developed a vibrant culture. Samples of Minoan writing have been found on thousands of clay tablets. A grand palace once stood in the ancient Crete city of Knossos (NAHS us). Palace ruins hint at rooms once covered with fanciful wall paintings. Various statues found within suggest that the Minoans worshiped goddesses. In the middle of the 1400s B.C., Knossos was destroyed, and Minoan civilization declined. People from mainland Greece, the Mycenaeans, were the likely invaders.





**The Mycenaeans** After the Mycenaeans came into power, mainland and island cultures blended. However, the focus of the cultures moved to the mainland, where the city of Mycenae was located. At the height of their power, around 1400 B.C., the Mycenaeans controlled the Aegean Sea and parts of the Mediterranean. Like the Minoans, the Mycenaeans also used writing. Studies of the Mycenaeans' script show that they spoke an early form of modern Greek.

The Minoans had gained much of their power through trade. Although the Mycenaeans traded widely, they relied upon conquest to spread their power.

**The Trojan War** Greek myth tells the story of the Trojan War, a long struggle between Greece and the city of Troy on the west coast of Asia Minor, in present-day Turkey. It's possible that Mycenaean warriors inspired this legend.

According to the myths, the Greeks conquered Troy by using a trick—the Trojan Horse. Greek warriors hid inside a huge wooden horse. The horse was rolled to the city gates. Thinking it was a gift, the Trojans brought the horse into their city. During the night the Greek soldiers climbed out of the horse and let the rest of their army into Troy. The Greeks burned and looted Troy and then returned home.

Two epics, or long story-telling poems, about the Trojan War survive today. They are the *Iliad* (IL ee ud) and the *Odyssey* (ahd ih see). These epics may have been composed by many people, but they are credited to a poet called Homer. The poems were important to the Greeks. They taught them what their gods were like and how the noblest of their heroes behaved. Today, people think these poems came from stories memorized by several poets and passed down by word of mouth through many generations. Homer may have been the last and greatest in this line of poets who told about the Trojan War.

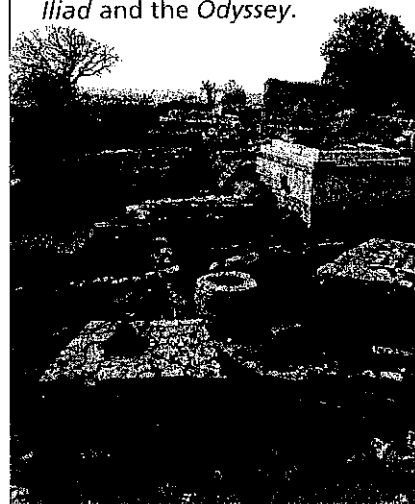
Most historians agree that the Trojan War did not happen exactly as Homer described it. Some believe that Homer's epics were inspired by a long battle between the Greeks and Trojans, but others argue that the epics were inspired by a series of minor battles. Troy was destroyed by a large fire in the mid-1200s B.C., an act that some historians believe may have been committed by invaders from Greece.

✓ **Reading Check** Contrast how Minoans and Mycenaeans spread their power.

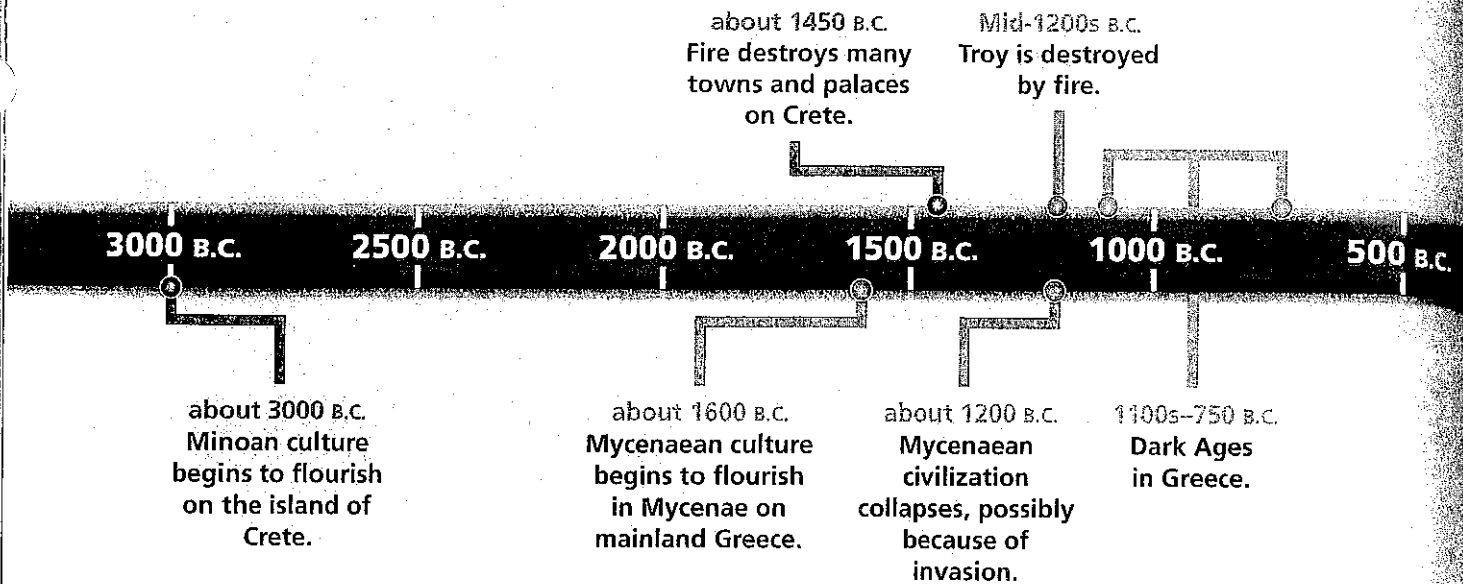


## Links to Science

**Troy Discovered** Over the years, people came to believe that Troy and the Trojan War were fiction. An amateur archaeologist, Heinrich Schliemann (HYNrik SHLEE mahn), disagreed. In the late 1800s he used clues in the *Iliad* to pinpoint the location of Troy. When he and later archaeologists dug there, they found nine layers of ruins from ancient cities. One was possibly the Troy of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.



## Beginnings of Ancient Greek Culture: 3000 B.C.–750 B.C.



### Timeline Skills

Two ancient peoples, the Minoans and the Mycenaeans, made an important impact on Greek history.

**Identify** Where and when did Minoan culture begin to flourish? **Analyze** How did the location of Mycenaean culture differ from the location of the Minoan culture?



Pottery painting of a Greek cobbler

### The Dark Ages of Greece

Not long after the end of the Trojan War, civilization in Greece collapsed. No one knows exactly why. Life went on, but poverty was everywhere. People no longer traded for food and other goods beyond Greece. They had to depend on what they could raise themselves. Some were forced to move to islands and to the western part of Asia Minor. They were so concerned with survival that they forgot the art of writing.

These years, from the early 1100s B.C. to about 750 B.C., have been called Greece's Dark Ages. Without writing, people had to depend on word of mouth to keep their traditions and history alive. Old traditions were remembered only in the myths that were told and retold.

Greece's Dark Ages were not completely bleak. During this time, families gradually began to resettle in places where they could grow crops and raise animals. Some of these family farms may have developed into villages. When they chose where to build their farms, people favored places near rocky, protected hills. Here they built structures to protect them from attack. The name for such a fortified hill was *acropolis*, meaning "high place."

After 800 B.C., people in Greece began writing again. It was during this period that Homer is believed to have recorded his epic about the Trojan War.

✓ **Reading Check** What happened during Greece's Dark Ages?

## Temple of Artemis

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus was the largest of all ancient Greek buildings. The temple was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. In 1869 British archaeologist John Turtle Wood uncovered the remains of the temple. His discovery marked the first time an ancient Greek site had been excavated, or uncovered. Ancient Greeks worshipped Artemis as the goddess of wild animals and the hunt.



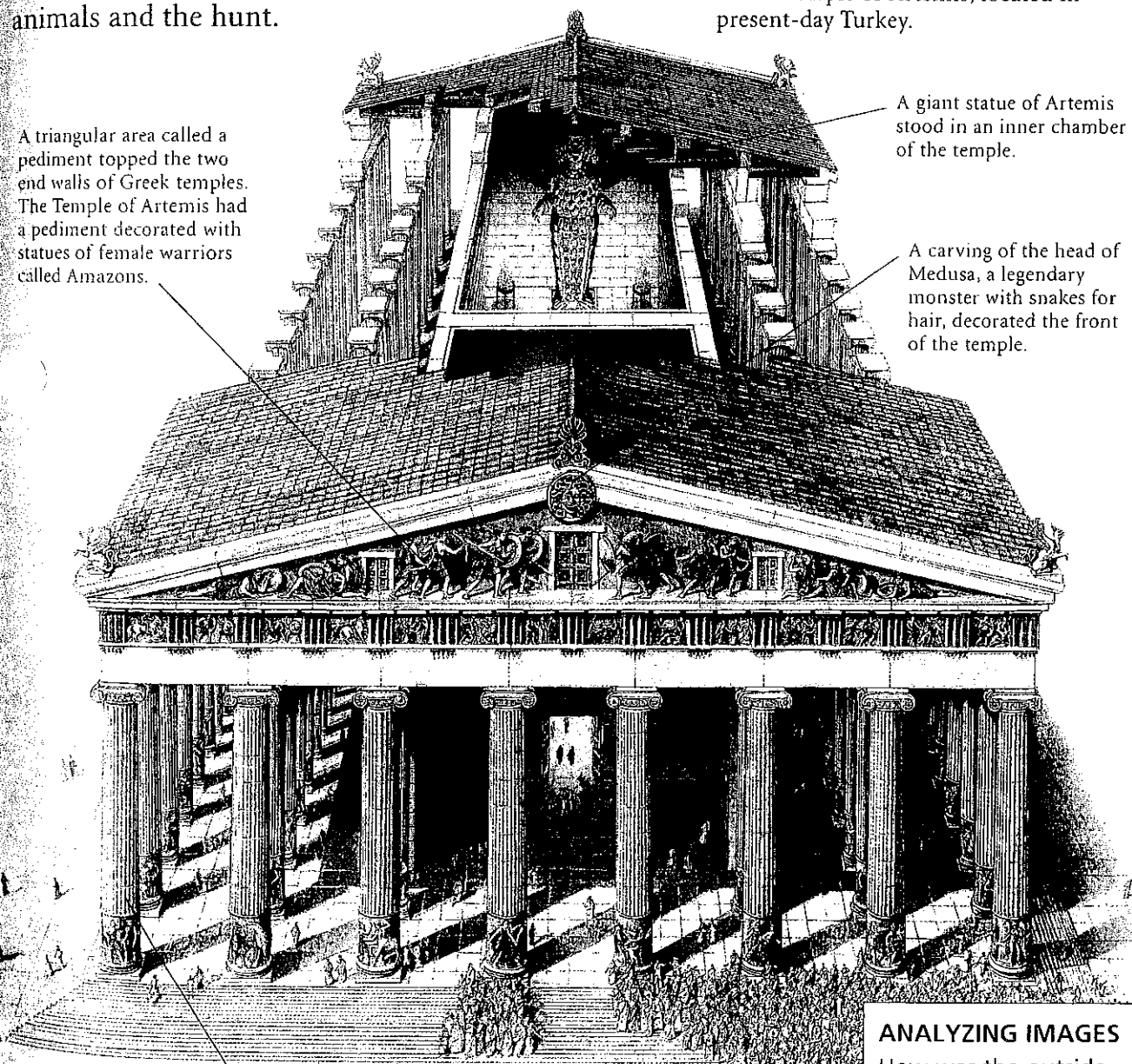
### Ruins of the Temple

Fragments of marble are all that remain of the Temple of Artemis, located in present-day Turkey.

A triangular area called a pediment topped the two end walls of Greek temples. The Temple of Artemis had a pediment decorated with statues of female warriors called Amazons.

A giant statue of Artemis stood in an inner chamber of the temple.

A carving of the head of Medusa, a legendary monster with snakes for hair, decorated the front of the temple.



The columns stood more than 60 feet (18 meters) high. They numbered 127 in all.

### ANALYZING IMAGES

How was the outside of the temple decorated?



## City-States Develop

Historians believe that sometime around 750 B.C., villages in a small area probably joined to form a city in the shadow of an acropolis. At that time, each city began to develop its own traditions and its own form of government and laws. Today, we call these tiny nations city-states. A city-state is not only a city, but also a separate independent state. Each city-state included a city and the villages and fields surrounding it. Hundreds of Greek city-states grew up, each more or less independent.



### Identify Sequence

What important changes led to the development of city-states in Greece?

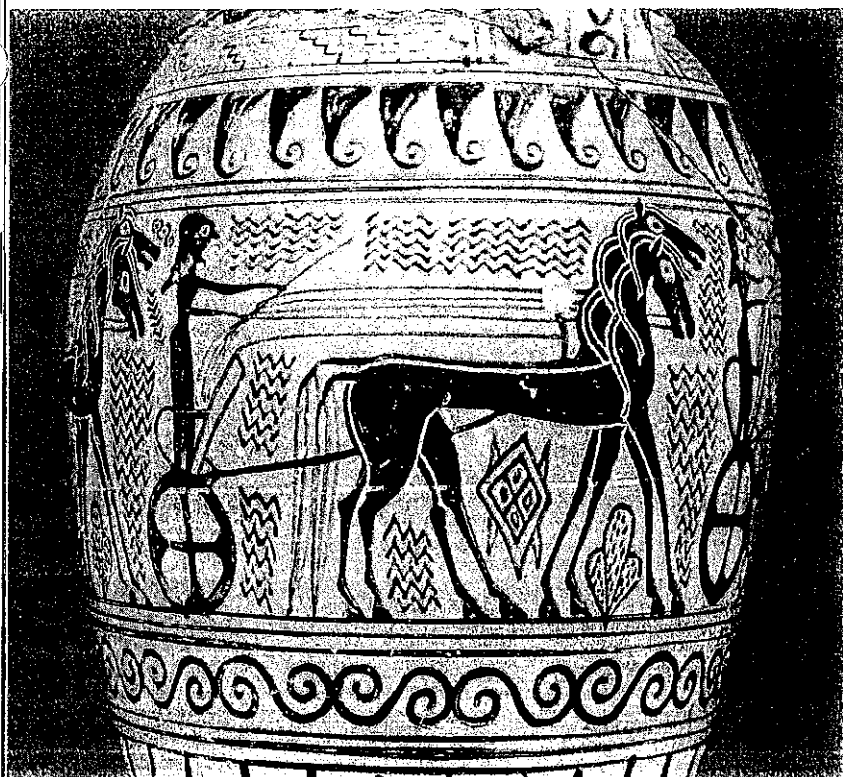
**Aristocracy: Nobles Rule** The earliest rulers of city-states were probably chieftains or kings who were military leaders. By the end of Greece's Dark Ages, most city-states were ruled by aristocrats, members of the rich and powerful families. Aristocrats controlled most of the good land. They could afford horses, chariots, and the best weapons to make themselves stronger than others.

**A New Type of Ruler** As the Greeks sailed to foreign ports trading olive oil, marble, and other products, the city-states became richer. A middle class of merchants and artisans devel-

oped. They wanted some say in the government of their cities. These people could not afford to equip themselves with horses and chariots for war. However, they could afford armor, swords, and spears. With these weapons, large groups of soldiers could fight effectively on foot. Gradually, military strength in the cities shifted from aristocrats to merchants and artisans.

As a result of these changes, aristocratic governments were often overthrown and replaced by rulers called tyrants. A tyrant was a ruler who seized power by force. Tyrants were usually supported by the middle and working classes. Today, we think of tyrants as being cruel and violent. That was true of some Greek tyrants, but others ruled wisely and well.

✓ **Reading Check** What kind of ruler often replaced aristocratic governments?



### The Aristocrats

Some wealthy ancient Greeks owned chariots. *Analyze* How did the aristocrats use their wealth to gain power?

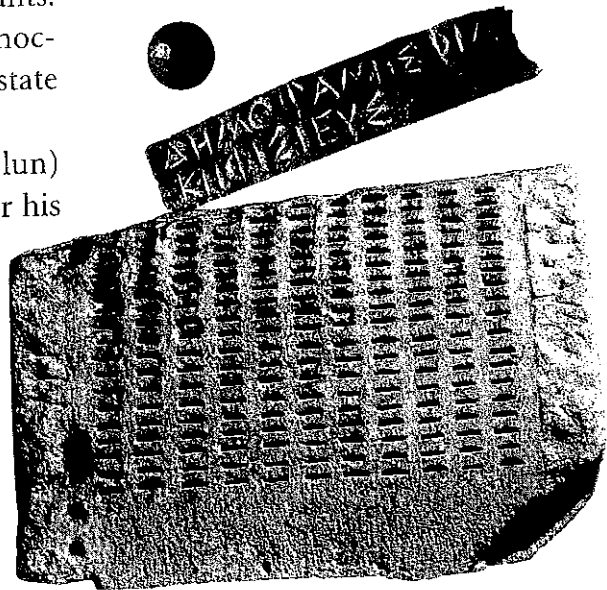
## Democracy in Greece

Actually, the people of many city-states overthrew tyrants. Some of the cities adopted a form of government called democracy. In a democracy, citizens govern themselves. The city-state in which democracy was most fully expressed was Athens.

About 594 B.C., a wise Athenian leader called Solon (SOH lun) won the power to reform the laws. Solon was well known for his fairness. His laws reformed both the economy and the government of Athens. One of his first laws canceled all debts and freed citizens who had been enslaved for having debts. Another law allowed any male citizen of Athens aged 18 or older to have a say in debating important laws. These laws and others allowed Athens to become the leading democracy of the ancient world.

Not everyone living in ancient Athens benefited from democracy. Only about one in five Athenians was a citizen. To be a citizen, a man had to have an Athenian father and mother. Some of the people living in Athens were enslaved. These people did not take part in democracy, nor did women or foreigners. Men who were citizens of Athens were free and self-governing.

**Reading Check** Why did some Athenians benefit more from democracy than others?



### Tools of Democracy

Athenians used a machine to help select juries. A colored ball, top, dropped into an allotment machine, bottom, would fall at random next to the slots containing names of potential jurors. In the middle is a voting tablet used in Athens. *Infer* How do you think voting helped to strengthen Athenian democracy?

## Section 1 Assessment

### Key Terms

Review the key terms listed at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

### Target Reading Skill

Place these events in the correct order: rise of the city-state, height of Minoan civilization, Greek Dark Ages.

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Recall** Describe the geographic setting of ancient Greece.

(b) **Predict** What effect do you think the geography of Greece had on the kind of communities that developed there?

2. (a) **Recall** Describe early Greek civilization.

(b) **Make Generalizations** How were the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations similar?

3. (a) **Identify** What two kinds of government first developed in the Greek city-states after the Greek Dark Ages?

(b) **Cause and Effect** How did the rise of the middle class help shape government in ancient Greece?

### Writing Activity

Write a description of the conditions in Greece during the period between the 1100s B.C. and the 700s B.C. Why are these years referred to as Greece's Dark Ages?

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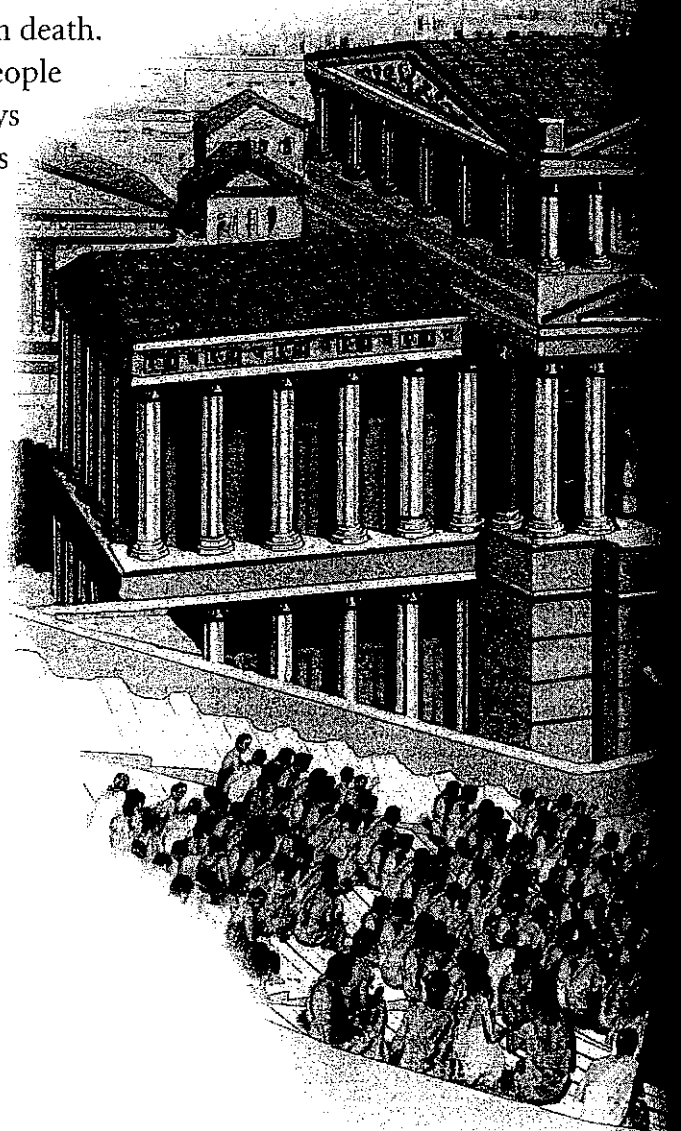
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## Focus On Ancient Greek Theater

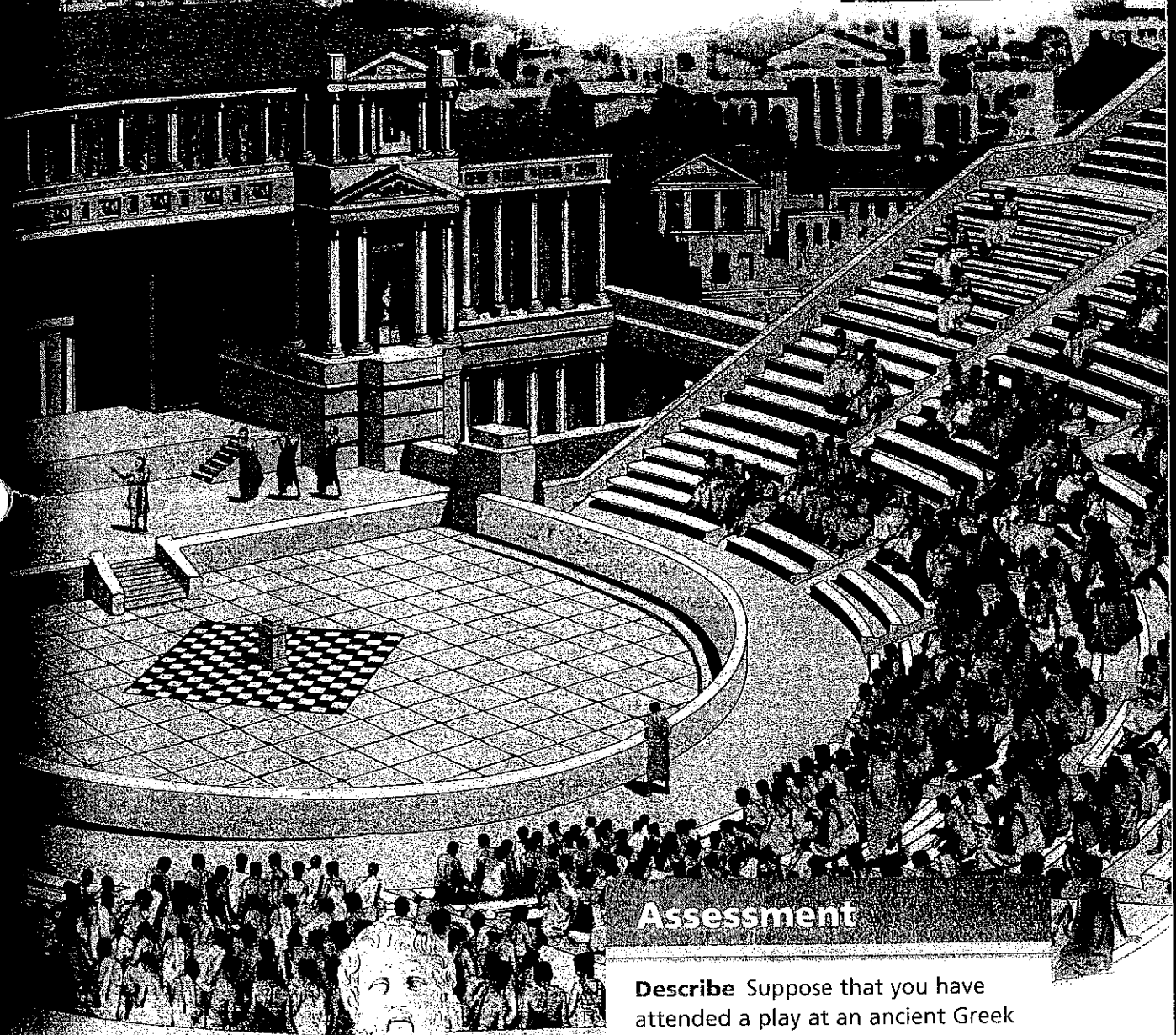
**D**rama was an important part of Greek culture. Many Greek plays were tragedies. These were often based on myth and were solemn and poetic. The main character was usually a good but imperfect person faced with a difficult choice. His or her struggles usually ended in death. Comedies dealt with well-known people and problems of the day. Greek plays were performed by only a few actors who played several roles. Instead of makeup, actors wore masks to indicate the kind of characters they played. A chorus danced, chanted, and commented on the action.

**The Theater** Early Greek theaters were probably just open areas in cities or next to hillsides. The audience would watch and listen to a chorus singing about the adventures of a god or hero. Later, theaters became much more complex but remained outdoors and open to the sky, much like a stadium today. The *theatron*, or "viewing place," was where the spectators sat. The theater illustrated to the right could seat 17,000 spectators! Rows of seats curved halfway around a large semicircular area called an *orchestra*. Behind the *orchestra* was a building called the *skene*. The *skene* was usually decorated as a palace or temple, depending on what background was needed for a particular play. Actors could enter and exit through the doors of the *skene*.



### Scene from Ancient Greek Play

These present-day actors are performing an ancient Greek play. They wear masks, just as their ancient counterparts did.



### Assessment

**Describe** Suppose that you have attended a play at an ancient Greek theater. Write a letter to a friend describing your experience.

**Compare** How did the experience of attending a Greek theater differ from that of attending a play today?

### A Great Greek Playwright

Sophocles was one of three great writers of Greek tragedies. Only seven of his plays have survived.

